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Adult Education Budget Cuts Weigh Heavily on Faculty, Administrators

As the fear over large budget cuts continues, the faculty and administrators at South Gate Community Adult School worry the reductions will seriously hinder its purpose.

By [Alejandro Lopez de Haro](#) | [Email the author](#) | March 6, 2012

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Adult schools throughout the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) continue to find themselves in financial limbo. Last week, Assistant Superintendent Ed Morris, who was in charge of the district's Adult School Education Division, was placed on administrative leave.

"We do not comment on personnel matters," said Monica Carazo, spokesperson for the LAUSD. "That is our official statement at this time."

As the news hit administrators at [South Gate Community Adult School](#), there was a sense of bewilderment as to what it might mean for their financial future.

"What to make of that? I have no idea," said Elsa Madrid, principal of South Gate Community Adult School.

On February, the board members of the LAUSD considered a budget proposal to eliminate all adult education funding. The board instead postponed any decision to March 13 so it could see if more funds could be used to save the adult program.

LAUSD is facing a \$543 million deficit with a budget that is close to \$7 billion for the upcoming 2012-2013 school year. Adult education services are usually allocated close to 2 percent of the budget, but they are expected to suffer severe cuts in funding.

Beside offering adult education, the adult schools help high school students graduate on time by offering them classes to make up their missing credits. Administrators are worried that the LAUSD's concerns over K-12 education might lead them to focus on funding for those grades and not on adult education, including job training classes, English as second language courses and computer classes.

Administrators at South Gate Community Adult School believe that even if the school is spared elimination, large budget cuts could still gut its main purpose.

"If only less then a third of [our programs exist], what do you call that?" asked said Audrey Coleman, an assistant principal at South Gate Community Adult School. "That would mean that a lot has been eliminated."

John Deasy, LAUSD superintendent, explained in a statement last January that keeping K-12 classes at reasonable sizes was a priority and that cuts

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"The elimination of the schools main programs would mean [fewer] teachers," said Elsa Madrid, principal of South Gate Community Adult School. "If reduction occurs, our teachers will have drastic hour cuts."

Their hours were already cut to 20 a week per instructor over the past few years.

"In order to make sure the class is full, they will give me two [different classes] during the same period," said Miguel Ramirez, 50, a teacher of algebra and English at South Gate Community Adult School. "This means you have to plan for the two different courses, and you are not getting paid two salaries."

The rooms at the South Gate Community Adult School have a capacity of around 45 students. Conducting multi-level classes (such as algebra 1 and algebra 2) at the same time with a larger group of students will take a toll on the extra time that teachers need for adult students.

"With multi-level classroom, it becomes very difficult for the student to get the attention and focus they need to progress quickly," said Justin Gorence, a teacher adviser at South Gate Community Adult School who also teaches an English as second language multi-level class.

This extra time can be particularly important in trying to teach adult students a subject that they have not dealt with for quite some time.

"They have been out of school for so long that they definitely need that extra time," said Ramirez. This is particularly evident in algebra classes. "Some don't have the prerequisites to do algebra; even though they have had basic math classes, it is still so foreign for them."

Serious budget cuts at the South Gate adult school could lead to layoffs, with teacher advisers among the most vulnerable.

"We have been told from sources in higher [positions] than us that if the budget has drastic cuts, there won't be teacher advisers," said Gorence.

Teacher advisers are the first staff members who students will meet as they enroll at an adult school. The advisers help the students pick the classes that fit their needs and develop a plan to accomplish their academic or educational goals. The teacher advisers also assist adult students when they need to make adjustments to their schedules so they can continue to juggle school and work.

"The administrators are going to do their best to meet [the students'] needs, but physically it is just impossible for one person to do all of that in an efficient way," said Gorence.

As the LAUSD vote nears, administrators at South Gate Community Adult School are trying to remain optimistic about saving the school.

"I think that our fight is going well because originally they were talking about the elimination [of our funds]," said Madrid. "We have realized that we do have some political pull, and maybe we can convince [Superintendent John Deasy about] the value of adult education."

Should funding for the South Gate Community Adult School be cut? / ¿Usted cree que deben de haber recortes financieros para programas como el South Gate Community Adult School?

No, it helps adults and high school students / No, esto ayuda a adultos y estudiantes de secundaria 53 (89%)

Yes, the LAUSD needs to make up its deficit somewhere / Si, la LAUSD necesita balancear su presupuesto de alguna manera 6 (10%)

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Education is like a plant and it grows and blossoms. It can be cut back only so much and still survive. If you pull it out by the roots, it will die and never have the chance to re-grow. DO NOT eliminate Adult Education. This is a short-term cash flow problem that may take a few years to rebound; but if

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